

CRANVANA

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CROSBYANA

The Journal Of The BRITISH BING CLUB

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The club was established in March 1950 by permission of
Mr. Bing Crosby and is associated with the American Club Crosby.

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~~AIN'T DOW' BAO DOW' NDTMAN'~~

EDITED BY AED. DAWI.

Now that the summer - like Crosby - has paid a very brief visit to these Islands and speedily departed, it behoves us to submit another issue of our humble magazine for the inspection of our members and, accordingly, we set ourselves down to the writing of yet another editorial.

Editorials are always a bugbear to write - one is supposed to incline to brevity rather than verbosity - one must endeavour to be witty and yet not offend the sensitivity of one's readers - and, above all, one should get vaguely to the point and not wander too far from the subject matter of the magazine that one is editing; added to which, is the fact that it is usually produced in a great hurry just before the journal goes to press. In short, an editorial is not one of the easiest pieces of writing to produce.

That is not to say, however, that we do not enjoy writing it. We do, we love it, for where else could we be so rude to so many in such a short space?! Also, we have found by experience that whereas if one insults people individually, to their faces, they either kick your teeth in, metaphorically speaking, or else take some other form of umbrage, if you insult them collectively in print they invariably pass off the insult with a shrug of the shoulders and a mental note not to read another of your editorials. Of course, now and then someone takes a stronger line - but nowadays we are always very careful to immerse all parcels received in water before opening, since we saw the postman literally go up in smoke before our eyes.

However, for once we are not going to be rude or hurl insults at you. You may all be a lazy bunch of so and so's who never write or send us articles, but still we must be fair and say that, although it is about four months since our last journal, we have not had one word of complaint, so this time you are all receiving a well deserved bonus in the shape of a double issue. "You lucky people you"!

With the exception of the Maidenhead massacre and the advent of "Just For You", little of note has happened on the Crosby field since we last went to press. Both of these are reported elsewhere in this issue, so we will merely confine ourselves to saying that we somewhat sheepishly decided to avoid the first and just managed, by an extra special effort, to catch the second.

The London members have not held any meetings lately, but it is hoped to hold one in the very near future. Any members interested should get in touch with either Jean or one of us.

And that, dear members, is where we must leave you until Christmas when, d.v. and w.p., we hope to be with you once again. So au revoir for the present, and if you do not find something that you like in this issue all we can say is that you are obviously in the wrong club! Vive la politesse!

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CROSBY TALK

by Jean.

By the time you read this Bing will have played his charity golf match with Messrs. Hope, Peers and Ray, and will be in Paris filming "Little Boy Lost". This film has been in preparation for several weeks, and Bing was supposed to have left the U.S. at the end of August to start filming it. However, owing to the serious illness of Dixie, he remained at home until September 12th. Fortunately Dixie is now well on the road to recovery and now only needs complete rest to be her old self again. She will not be able to travel to Europe with Bing as had been previously arranged.

* * * * *

Bing made his television debut on June 31st after turning down fabulous offers from various sponsors for two years or more. He, along with Bob Hope and several other stars, appeared on a 14½ hour programme to raise funds for the U.S. Olympic team. As we were not fortunate enough to see this show, the next best thing is to quote from U.S. columnist John Crosby's review:-

"Bing Crosby, that very relaxed man, took his time, plenty of time. For the last three or four years he has been asking questions about T/V of everyone who knew anything about it. His own opinions on the subject remained strictly his own. So far as I knew, he wasn't passing them around. Meantime he stayed away. While everyone from Shakespeare to Helen Hayes was getting into the act, Crosby stayed out. Until last Saturday night. Then, teamed up with Bob Hope, he made his debut on the 14½ hr.-long telethon for the benefit of the U.S. Olympic Fund. I thought he was terrific.

It's difficult to assess the Crosby charm with any degree of coherence, but I'll try. For one thing, there is a large measure of intelligence mixed up in it. In talking to athletes or to Avery Brundage or to Bill Corum or to Walter Pidgeon, Crosby always seemed to know the score just a little better than they did.

This lad never makes a wrong move. When Mr. Hope expressed dissatisfaction with the way the money was coming in (a bit of querulousness that didn't sit too well with just all the listeners), Mr. Crosby made it clear that it was Mr. Hope, not himself, who was irked.

And when Martin and Lewis, a couple of real tough customers, tore in, Mr. Crosby very quickly and quietly got lost. His own casual style can cope with anything except those zanies, so he just didn't try. When the noise abated and the two perpetrators had disappeared he strolled out: "Is Operation Pandemonium all over? I sat it out in the bomb shelter." That disposed of them.

Mostly, Crosby and Hope - who was being much funnier than usual - just read names of contributors off sheets of paper. It doesn't sound like much, and it wasn't; still to have held so great an audience with so simple a routine for so extended a period is a type of genius of some sort.

Crosby wandered on and off camera unexpectedly, and while the other entertainers had to be shoved away, he gave the customers less rather than more than they expected - which is a good trick if you can do it. Considering the fact that he was on for all that time, he sang almost nothing - which is another good trick if a singer can get away with it. "

Other radio and T/V critics were of the same opinion, that Bing and T/V were made for each other, and they are all looking forward with eagerness to his own T/V show, which will not, as previously stated, start this Autumn. Bing's debut leaves him undisputed champ of about every entertainment field, films, radio - and now T/V.

* * * * *

Bing and Bob Hope will co-star in a film version of the famous stage musical "Guys and Dolls". It is from an original story by Damon Runyan and Bing will portray the gambler-singer whilst Bob inherits the Sam Levine comedy role. The film will carry the Frank Loesser songs from the show.

* * * * *

Another Bing-Bob co-starrer scheduled for the Winter will be "Road to the Moon". This will be filled with all the science-space thrills that can be turned into laughs. None other than George Pal, who made "Destination Moon", is turning over some of his best trick effects to producer Paul Jones. This will be the seventh in the famous "Road" series. Their latest effort, "Road to Bali", was completed a few months ago.

* * * * *

Paramount seem determined to keep Bing very busy, for he is also scheduled to make another Irving Berlin musical with Fred Astaire; this time it will be "White Christmas".

* * * * *

You'll find a pen-pal section in this issue of the magazine; all members are invited to make use of it, and anyone wishing to be included in future issues, please let us know.

MEMBERS' ADVERTISEMENTS.

James W. Cummings, 6 George Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has many American, British, Australian film magazines, and photographs of film stars, including Bing, for sale or exchange.

Please write above address. All letters answered.

For the benefit of collectors interested in obtaining recordings of Bing's Blow-ups and Air-Shots, Messrs. Valentine Sound Recorders, of 4253 Farmdale Avenue, North Hollywood, California, U.S.A. can supply many items on a strictly cash basis.

Write to the above address for full details and catalogue.

Only in the town of Elko is Bing Crosby "the man in the street" a rancher from the North Fork country: one of the boys- and his only real distinction is that he is honorary Mayor of the town where the folks call the real Mayor by his first name.

The people of Elko know, of course, that the man sings and is in the movies. They are, as a matter of fact, proud that a local lad is so famous in other parts of the world, but it doesn't make much of a difference.

In the cowtown of Elko Bing can walk down the street and get no more attention than an occasional "Hi." He can stop to look in a store window and nobody else will stop unless there is something else in the window worth looking at. He can sit down on the edge of the curb or play hop-scotch with the children just like any other inhabitant and he'll attract no more attention than any of his neighbours.

Elko is Bing's haven. It's the solution to all his problems. During the war years he went on a tour of the United States and found that Elko would be a suitable place to raise his family. According to the editor of the Elko Daily Free Press., the customary expression made by men looking across the wide Nevada plains to the fertile foothills is, "Man, what a country for cattle." But not Bing. He rode out with a friend to a high plateau for a good view and said, "Sure looks a good country to raise the kids in." Shortly after this statement he bought his beautiful, sprawling cattle spread.

The early days of Bing Crosby, rancher were probably the most satisfying of his life. Summer was the time for play - or work - for the Crosby family. Bing would go to Hollywood to make his pictures in the winter, and would go to San Francisco and other coast cities for his radio programmes. He was making more money than ever before, but as he crooned city songs to the audiences in the world his heart was in his 3 ranch in Nevada. With the first days of Summer the clan would trot off to the ranch for branding, haying, home musical evenings, country sewing parties and the many bucolic practices of western folk.

Pretty soon the place first acquired got too small and Bing decided that the boys could be kept busier and healthier on a bigger spread. One day Bing buttonholed a fellow who owned the circle S ranch and by nightfall was a much bigger cattleman than he had been in the morning. His present holdings are worth about two million dollars. Bing has over 3,500 head of cattle which bring him an annual profit in "meat" of a quarter of a million dollars. His brands are "Y" Bench, the P X Straight Away, the Cross B, The Quarter Circle X and the Quarter Circle N. His deed land amounts to about 25,000 acres. The hay crop is 4,500 tons which, with the expert aid of 35 men, the boys fork in. The Crosbys operate their own hydro electric plant that supplies electricity and power. They have erected an air strip over 3,700 feet long to accommodate a good sized twin engined plane. Bing doesn't care for flying but his friends do and he has recently bought a plane for the boys to learn to fly. Privacy on the phone is the one drawback for their isn't any and the Crosbys have to share a line serving no less than twenty two parties.

The twins are not quite so well developed as their older

brother, Gary, but it is certain they will soon catch up. They are as much at home on the range as their old man sounds when he sings the famous old western classic. The youngster of the mob is Lindsay. He is a superb horseman and a fine worker, but it is the opinion of all who know him that he is the business man in the family and will one day wind up owning the entire ranch. It is possible that Lindsay is closest to Bing, although Bing wouldn't like it said or thought that that was so. Nevertheless, Bing and Lyn are a couple of buddies. Lindsay calls Bing "Meyer", and is as quick witted as his Dad's other sparring partner, Bob Hope. And those who have heard him will vouch that Lindsay is a singer of such quality that he may drop nicely in the old man's shoes one day.

The boys were to have appeared in the Hopalong Cassidy- Bing Crosby western but the film was called off and the boys stuck to their real western life.

Life in Elko for Bing Crosby is entirely different for him than his Hollywood career, but there are certain root similarities. For instance, Bing's close friends spend a good deal of time around Elko, either working or playing. Bill Morroe, the Crosby radio show producer is there nearly all the time Bing is and Bing's two song tailors are frequent guests. These urban fellows with Bing will retire about 9:30 after a couple of beers and are soon living western style rather than bringing Hollywood to Elko.

The town of Elko is not a wild town, but it doesn't mess around with foolish intolerance. There are two fine hotels owned by a pal of Bing's, Nert Crumly. There are gambling tables and millionaires are a dime a dozen.

The esteem with which Bing Crosby's neighbours hold him was evident from the reception they gave him on his one and only theatrical appearance at the premiere of Here Comes the Green. It is doubtful if many of the Greeners' neighbours had ever seen him act, nevertheless they all turned out to see his film and a great party was thrown after the show with large numbers of press representatives from the cities there. No doubt the press thought and wrote it as a grand reception for Bing Crosby the film star but it wasn't. It was for Bing Crosby the rancher and neighbour.

Sometime ago when Bing had just finished a picture and was looking very tired he went back to his dressing room and rang up Gary asking to get out the car and drive the whole family down to Elko. After a long all night drive the family arrived at the Nevada ranch and poured from the Cadillac. As soon as they took in the rich air of the wide open spaces they straightened up. They were home!

A N N O U N C E M E N T S

The PHILIPS ELECTRICAL company have acquired a factory near London and will press and release gramophone records very soon. They have the rights of the entire American COLUMBIA catalogue and it is just possible they may patch up those old Crosby numbers and re-issue them.

The EMI group (HMV, PARLOPHONE, COLUMBIA, MGM) are now issuing 33.3 and 45 rpm discs. We point out that besides needing a special record player the 45 rpm discs require a special adapter for fitting over the normal spindle. Anyone requiring particulars of the new gram may send for full information to A.N. Allen, 68, Grimston road, Radford Boulevard, Nottingham. Please enclose a stamped address envelope for reply.

CROSBY AND JAZZ

A short series of articles dealing with the jazz aspect in the life and career of Bing Crosby.

In the last issue of Crosbyana I was rather perturbed to read what I consider to be a very bad criticism of a record. Les Gaylor in his regular article on record reviews confessed that he just didn't understand jazz and therefore he reviewed "The Girl Friend" in what I consider a very biased and unfair light. Les Gaylor is a very great friend on mine and I like his taste, respect his views and admire his Bing knowledge. And I know that Les would be the last member of our great little club to take offence at my criticism of his reviews. Yet I firmly believe that Les must either give up reviewing Crosby discs or take a serious and intelligent interest in jazz and modern rhythmic music. Because Bing and Jazz are almost one and the same ... they walk hand in hand. After I read Les's review, I played my copy of the disc in question "The Girl Friend" ... it opens with an excellent solo, an ensemble of saxes and brass play a motif in the slurred manner with the drummer Louie Bellson, bassist Bob Baldwin and guitarist Bill Kronk laying down a really fine beat in the rhythm section. Listen to the piano after the word "refined". After the first chorus by Bing in which he gives a delightful new twist to the Dick Rodgers and Lorenz Hart lyrics the saxes and brass section intermingle giving a take-off break ending with a beautiful solo trombone by the sentimental gentleman himself Tommy Dorsey. Bing takes a second chorus ending in semi-riff and slurred sax-work. Bing literally puts a new interpretation on the lyrics. Always a superb composition, Bing adds lustre to it with his wonderful timing and his easy clipped phrasing.

That is how I hear the disc ... and I think I'd be right in saying that every Crosby-Jazz enthusiast and collector would see it in the same way. It is significant that the large majority of Crosby collectors also collect jazz, swing or modern music. Only by listening to (and thereby collecting) jazz can any enthusiast obtain a comparison with a good performance.

And so I inevitably come to the question "Can Bing Sing Jazz"? The answer is definitely YES ... but not often enough. So let us turn back the clock to that wonderful age of 1928 onwards when Bing was led along the Great Whiteman Way, slap-bing into the laps of the jazz big shots of that golden age, Bix and Trumbauer and Venuti and Lang and Hayton and Joe Sullivan and Ellington and Redman and old uncle Tom Dorsey and all, uncle Tom Dorsey and all. Thus Bing was privileged to have a front seat in the Great Show. The times produced genius and fame and starvation and death and Bing caught his fair share of the first two. His great friend Bix caught all four but that's another story, and another of his great friends, Eddie Lang went the same way. To say that Bing was sorrowful when Eddie passed on is rather an understatement. Bing worshipped Ed, named his son after him Phillip Lang and he wouldn't have any other guitarist to accompany him if he had his way.

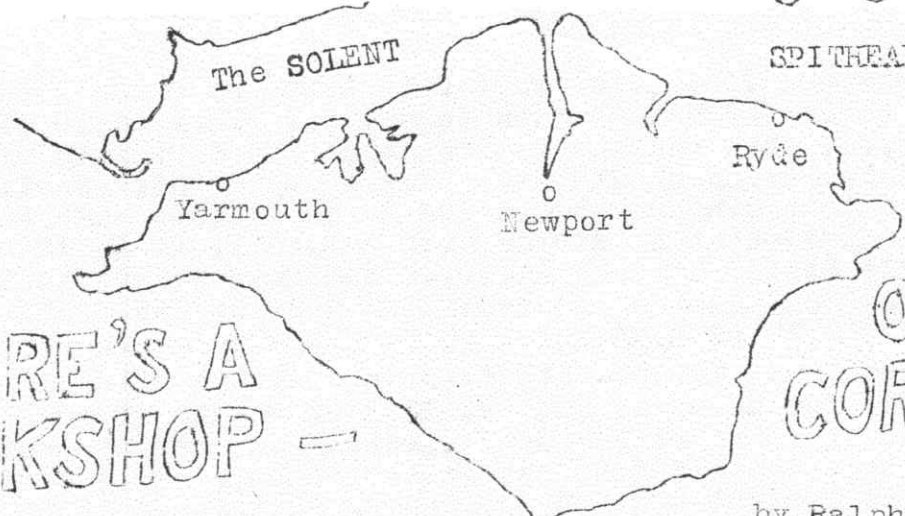
Bing started as a drummer (cum part time vocalist) in his college jazz band. The Musicaladers as the band was called was a six piece outfit of almost conventional 1920 jazz instrumentation. Miles Rinker played alto and clarry, Jimmy Heaton played cornet, Fats Pritchard plunked the banjo, Al Rinker piano and Bing drummed. Their very limited library ranged from Jintown Blues and Prince of Wails to Whispering. They found inspiration in the discs of the Memphis Five

and the Tennessee Ten. Bing kept fine time and had a good beat. But somehow he never did gather much technique. They often played at the Pekin Cafe this was a very low joint and certainly not the sort of place a future lawyer should have been spending his evenings. It is jazz history that Bing never did end up as another male Portia and instead he and pianist Al Rinker high-tailed it to California to stay with Rinker's Sister Mildred Bailey. Whiteman caught their act at the Metropolitan, Los Angeles and thus Bing went on his merry way.

The 1927 and 1928 Whiteman band was no ordinary "symphonic jazz" aggregation. It was able to play a little of every kind of music and it could also break up into small jazz groups of real distinction. For a couple of years it featured soloists and arrangements which began to justify the tag that Paul had collected on his way to fame, The King of Jazz. The trumpet section was led by that immortal legendary figure Leon Bismarck Beiderbecke, Bix from now on, Frankie Trumbauer played C-melody sax, Bill Rank trombone and in 1928 Jimmy Dorsey came in on clarinet aided by brother Tommy on Trombone. Izzy Friedman on clarinet Min Leibrock on bass sax (ex Wolverines) Matty Malneck on hot fiddle and Lennie Hayton at piano were all more than ordinary musicians. When these men combined as soloists or section leaders with the Rhythm Boys the effect was startling by 1927 standards.

On the records of "From Monday On", "Because my Baby don't mean Maybe now", "Louisiana", "Taint so Honey, Taint so" and "Coquette" to name just a few you can hear the Rhythm Boys, alone or with other singers from the Whiteman organisation backed by Bix or Tram or Rank or some section work that represents these early jazz musicians at their best. The trumpet trio with Bix leading on "Coquette" was a beautiful buffer for Bing's voice. Bing was beginning to take solos and by 1928 one could hear a great deal of him on Oh Miss Hannah, High Water and Muddy Water etc. Using Bing as a soloist the Rhythm Boys (alone or with Jack Fulton, Charlie Gaylord or Skin Young or all three) set up humming backgrounds in the jazz vein that ante-dated by ten years the vocal group sounds that found such success with Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller bands, the Pied Pipers and The Modernaires. In 1929 Bix left Whiteman and his place was taken by Andy Secrest, and in came Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang. Eddie quickly became Bing's closest friend. He was a fellow Catholic and his shyness and quiet disposition and hesitant speech were in marked contrast to the noisy Bing's effusive personality. The silken sound that Lang drew from his guitar strings were matched only perhaps by the exquisite sonorities of Andres Segovia, greatest of the Spanish classical guitarists. Bing discovered that single string arpeggios and chords strummed on Eddie's guitar made the most engaging possible background for his husky vocal tones. Eddie is featured on many Bing discs and apart from the Whiteman's, he can be heard on BrE 1380 "Please" with Anson Weeks and his Orchestra. Other examples are How Long will it Last and Sweet Georgia Brown. This latter disc also features the xylophone of Red Norvo, who was Mildred Bailey's husband. Lang can be heard to full advantage on Whiteman's "I'm Comin' Virginia" (Victor 20751) In the next article, I intend to list recorded examples of some of the Bing records of the Whiteman period that give good examples of the jazz musicians who played with him.

To be continued.



THERE'S A
JUNKSHOP -

ON THE
CORNER.....

by Ralph Harding
Or DIGGIN' DISCS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT (with frequent interruptions
by Audrey

My continuous annual junk-shopping expedition was recently interrupted for a whole week when I was literally forced to take my family for seven days holiday. I believe this holiday-making once a year is considered the normal practice among well regulated families but I must confess that a whole week away from records, Crosbyana and discophile merely to lose oneself on the sands, suck innumerable ice-creams and pander to the tastes of bawling children is a wasted effort. However I submitted various high class resorts to Audrey such as Liverpool's dockland, Birmingham's dead-end, Cardiff and even Southampton (must be a load of "V" discs kicking around there) but my suggestions were over-ruled and Ryde I.O.W. was the place. To my mind, the only advantages of the I.O.W. is that Les Gaylor lives there and that there MUST be one place that stacks up old wax.

(All I wanted was a nice quiet, peaceful holiday ... I knew the worst when my worst half packed one shirt, a toothbrush, three record catalogues and two record-carrying cases ! ... AUDREY)

We arrived at Ryde on the Saturday morning. After unpacking and settling in I decided to case the town. It took me two hours to cover Ryde ... I discovered several places of interest. There was a marine yard called Balls (proprietor Alf Ball) who advertised on an old board that they paid the highest prices for lead, zinc, horse-hair and rags. They only paid 1½d per lb for newspaper (deflation!!) This looked promising but like all the other places was closed and not a chance of opening until the Monday (which was Bank-holiday anyway) Almost opposite in the same road was a joint called Silvers. They sold anything from second hand pins to pintables. I managed to scrape away enough grime from the window to see a stack of records piled in the far corner. Down the road apiece was a furniture shop called Taylors and in the main road was a real out-and-out junk-shop of the Edgware Road variety called Beeney (Prp. Joe Boency) This place showed real promise. Now that's what I call a very happy start to any holiday.

(How patient can you get ? For 51 Saturdays every year I never see the guy. So we go on holiday (?) and he gets lost for the 52nd Sat. He rolled back to the digs at six and said with an

exhausted voice "When do we eat babe ?" I had spent the afternoon unpacking, amusing my brood and generally apologizing for the guy's absence. After all most land-ladies like to get a glimpse of the party who will be paying the bill. But after the children were in bed, we had a lovely evening strolling along the esplanade and only interrupted once when the maniac rang up his partner in London to find out if anyone had brought in any interesting records during the afternoon.... AUDREY)

Operations started on Tuesday after the Bank holiday when the shops opened up. First port of call Tuesday morn was Silver who turned out to be a toughish nut to crack. He wasn't interested in people after old records, he showed all the usual suspicion and after I shot my best line and genially argued he grudgingly consented to let me look through the records he had stowed away. It took me about twenty minutes to lift all the junk off the pile and about five minutes flat to look through them. The first fifty discs revealed nothing and I was getting a little bit worried because one just has to take something, when I uncovered a picture label Bing Sweet Leilani. The remainder of the pack revealed a Little Tich on Jumbo, McKinney's Cotton Pickers on Victor and as a grand climax the last few revealed a battered Okeh with accomp by Sylvester Weaver. A very promising start ! On to Alf Ball's marine yard. I had a very pleasant conversation with Alf. No he didn't have any records but there was a pile in the back that had been there for several years and they were pretty old. The pile in question had been out in all weathers since recording was just a gleam in Edison's eye and as far as playing was concerned, they were hopeless. Amongst the pile was an Armstrong hot five on French Odeon. The label was just about readable and the wax was warped and useless. This will go down as my favourite story of "the one that got away". Joe Beeney proved to be a colourful character but no records. I wandered around to other places that could be interesting with junking potentialities but no further luck. There was a cobbler in the High St with an imposing array of old junk in his window. However he was stone deaf and he keeps a large supply of slips of paper for customers to write on. I will never forget the look on his face when I handed him a slip of paper with "I BUY OLD RECORDS ...GOT ANY" pencilled on it.

(I was relaxing on a deck-chair having a good old natter to another lady, watching my two children throw sand at each other and waiting to see if a youngster managed to find where he buried his father in sand two hours previously when up bounded Ralph clutching a few records and jabbering about food. His first words ... WHEN DO WE EAT ?" AUDREY !)

I took my family to Ventnor on Wednesday and having got them settled comfortably on the beach, I proceeded to dig the town. The first place was a furniture shop by the bus stop at the top near the Town Hall. The usual polite enquiry brought forth a negative response. He had records on occasions but the week before a certain Mr. Harridge had bought all he had in the shop. Collectors will know Harridges shop in London one of the largest of the record collectors shops. At another place I found a couple of unimportant items and a good copy of King Oliver on Brunswick. In the evening, I went into Newport and tried to find where Les Gaylor lived. Eventually I tracked him down and we spent a very pleasant hour together playing records, discussing discs and swapping Crosby talk. Les has a very nice

collection of Crosby and bulging files of correspondence from various people. He keeps them in cardboard packing boxes and as he knows the location of every disc, he keeps no filing system. Unlike the Harding patent system of using filing numbers, numerous book-catalogues and being able to find any record after a three hour search.

(I am seriously thinking of getting a divorce for desertion. Can you imagine any sane man leaving me alone all the evening to go off just to talk records with a fellow-collector.... AUDREY)

More record research on Thursday at Sandown, Shanklin and Bonchurch. These three places produced nothing at all, but I did manage to find in a second-hand bookshop a 1931 HMV catalogue and a very interesting catalogue volume complete of DUC-ART piano roll music by the Aeolian Co. New York. This massive effort about the size of a family bible cost a shilling and is priceless as regards the information contained.

I visited Cowes on Friday and although I chased around the town and covered every part there were very few places that showed any prospecting chances. The usual enquiries brought forth negative results and lifted eyebrows and altogether the last two days were wasted efforts. At Cowes I saw the prototype of the new flying boat Princess built by Saunders Roe Ltd. It weighs 147½ tons and anyone interested in getting the gen please write to Les Gaylor because he is actually working on the job. I found that out too late to get a permit to look over the job. To say it is terrific is a classic understatement. It's the biggest plane I've ever seen and ever likely to see.

(It was Regatta week in Cowes. The season of the year ... people travel for miles to see Cowes fireworks. Cowes racing ... even the Duke of Edinburgh was there ... and what does my opposite number do? He looks for old records. We visited a church in Whippingham and the guide said the records of this church go back to the fifteenth century. Up pipes Maniac and asks if he had any old records going back to about 1925 ... American issues preferred. You can't take him anywhere ... AUDREY)

I spent my last evening with Les Gaylor again in Newport. The time seemed to shoot by and I missed my bus. I left in a borrowed raincoat (it was belting down with rain) and Les saw me down to town where I managed to catch a bus going Ryde-wards. I arrived back in Ryde and slightly soaked I knocked up the house at midnight to let me in.

(Deserted for my last night on holiday I went to the cinema. I was thoroughly enjoying a film called "The greatest show on earth" thinking that I had got away from records and Crosby ... on the screen flashed Bing munching popcorn and watching the circus show. Ralph gets in about midnight absolutely soaked to the skin. His first words were "Any chance of something to eat?" ... AUDREY)

Well I came back with several interesting records, a couple of catalogues and one or two contacts for records in the future. Looking for records on the I.O.W. is rather difficult ... either it has been covered extensively in previous years or the material is just not there anymore. However it's great fun looking and you'll always get a great welcome in Newport from Les Gaylor.

(The VERY FIRST thing he did when we got back to home was to switch on the gram and start playing over records AUDREY !!!)

THE ROAD TO MAIDENHEAD.

by Jean.

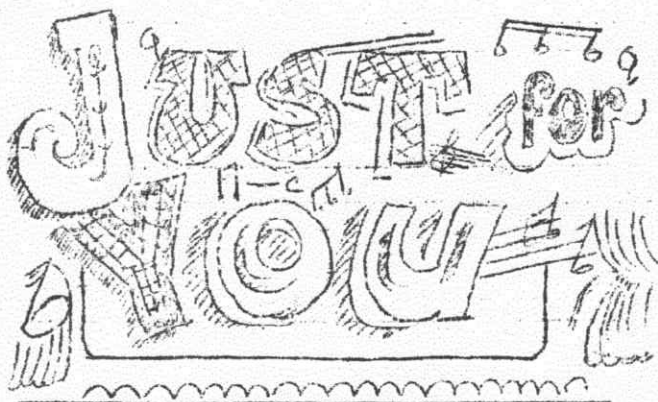
I don't suppose that Bing ever wants to hear the name "Maidenhead" again and, after what he went through on Sunday, September 21st, one can hardly blame him. However, the National Playing Fields Association ended up the day several hundred pounds better off, and several thousand Bing fans went home that night happy that they had finally seen that most amiable gentleman in the flesh.

Most of you will have read in the papers about the pandemonium that broke loose on the Temple Golf Course; this is quite true - it was one mad rush from beginning to end, but what you are all interested in is ... what is Bing really like? Does he look the same as he does on the screen? Does he really have that middle aged spread that Bob Hope and certain magazines keep talking about? The answer to the first question is NO, he doesn't look quite the same as he does on the screen, he looks younger. This is a fact; we all know that Bing carries his age well on the screen, but that could easily be put down to make-up, but after seeing him in person it is clear that his youthful appearance is no trick of make-up, but an actual fact. As for his alleged spreading waist-line, it just doesn't exist; the "plump Mr. Crosby" myth was exploded before my eyes. Some of the famous Crosby characteristics were well in evidence - the pipe, the friendly smile, and the flashy clothes. Bing was wearing a maroon shirt, canary yellow cardigan, brown trousers and shoes and a check golf cap.

Knowing nothing whatsoever about golf, I can't say how good Bing is at the game but, judging by shouts of approval from some of the golfers in the crowd, I gathered that he was very good. It looked as though Bing was being arrested as he tried to make his way from hole to hole. He had a policeman on each side of him propelling him by the arms, one in front clearing the path and one behind trying to keep the crowd from hemming Bing in too closely.

Altogether it was a most enjoyable afternoon - one which I shall remember for many years. Although I didn't have the pleasure or privilege of speaking to Bing in person, I can quote the words of someone who did have a very close contact with Bing on that day - Donald Peers. He said this from the stage of a Nottingham theatre: "You've probably heard that spot of bother we had at Maidenhead this week-end, but I want to tell you about Bing Crosby because he was really the main attraction. Everyone was just there to try to get close enough to touch the most wonderful, most fabulous man in the entertainment business. He is a wonderful person and I marvel at his patience with the hundreds of people who tried to get near him."

I think that just about sums up the day at Maidenhead, and it seems that Bing went on with his show-stealing when he appeared later that day at yet another charity show at the Stoll Theatre, London.



A REVIEW OF BING'S LATEST FILM

by Geoff. Milne.

This last year has been a veritable cavalcade of musical movies, parading down from the screen literally one after the other, and all, I suppose, bringing some kind of enjoyment and pleasure to a respectable percentage of the patrons who pack the cinemas for these "all-talking, all-singing super-dupers". Several have been the vehicle for re-vamping songs by a now lilac-scented composer of yesteryear; some have introduced new and lesser known singers to the wearying public; one has again made famous (à la Jolson technique) a very popular lady of the early thirties, to wit, Jane Froman. Between them, they have been spectacular, noisy, colourful, just pleasant, and even just plain watery. But it has fallen to the lot of our old pal, Bing, to give us a touch of the really genuine homely thing, in the form of "Just for You" - a warm, unpretentious, pleasantly corny, technicoloured musical. Yes, I mean corny, but not in a derogatory sense for, after all, when was there a musical that didn't have a corny story?

"Just for You" is based on a book (or Play?) called "Famous", and is about a stage-producer father - a widower - (played by The Groaner) who is so busy raking in the shekels from his shows that he entirely forgets his parental duties to his two children, a boy aged eighteen and a daughter of about twelve (played by Bob Arthur and Natalie Wood). The efforts of the boy in writing songs (unsuccessfully) makes father realise this neglect. Boy has, meanwhile, fallen in love with father's Star and wife-to-be (Jane Wyman). Dad takes son and daughter on vacation, to get to know his children better. He doesn't! Son busies himself wooing Star, who has flown in from New York very conveniently, whilst daughter is only interested in gaining admission to the local Preparatory School.

Star and son misunderstand one another over a ridiculously embarrassing talk on the lake, while father manages nothing except an introduction to the school Head-mistress, resulting in the admittance of his daughter - though not before nearly disgracing himself and daughter by singing an "out of mood" song with Ben Lessy. Son meanwhile dashes back to New York to see Star in her new show. He woos Star again in song; Star gets worried over son's intentions, and how to tell him "you've got me all wrong", when father appears on the scene in time to break the news of his impending marriage. This just about kills son (I could have easily), so he joins the Air Force. Father tours all the Air bases searching for son (I can't think what for), finally catching up with him in Alaska. Father is

re-united with wife-to-be (Star - see before), much to son's gratification, he having realized he stood no chance, and anyway they build men in the Air Force. (In my opinion, they passed him by).

The film, though it had many embarrassing moments, was of a reasonably high standard as musicals go. Bing did well with a role which was not altogether tailor made for him. The boy was uncomfortable to watch and listen to (I understand he is actually 29 ! - if all American youth act like this, then Long Live the Boy Scouts). Natalie Wood as the daughter was charming, and Miss Wyman brought real zip to the whole proceedings. She is a perfect partner for Bing, and should be teamed with him more often. Ethel Barrymore put in a very welcome appearance as the Head-mistress of the Girls' School.

The songs, on the whole, were pretty good; not, however, what one might expect from the pens of Warren and Robin. Special mention must be made of "Zing a Little Zong" as the best of the bunch, with perhaps "I'll Si-Si Ya in Bahia" a good second. Both numbers went with a real swing, as you will hear if you get the records now available on Brunswick. "On the Ten-Ten from Ten-Ten-Tennessee" with Ben Lessy, was adequately performed, considering Lessy's immobility and poor nasal tone. The title song - used by the boy to woo Miss Wyman - though definitely not in the hit class, was a pleasant enough ballad type offering. Jane Wyman's own speciality, "Checkin' my Heart" was excellent, and throughout the whole film the numbers were presented in a very lavish style on magnificent sets, and all extremely well arranged.

The Mexican Ballet Company, along with Jane, gave an admirable performance of "The Maiden of Guadalupe", but I do feel this kind of thing is creeping into our musicals far too often these days.

Anyhow, I enjoyed the picture enough to see it three times, so that should be enough recommendation.

In the next issue of our magazine, I expect to review Bing and Bob's latest cavortings on "The Road to Bali".

MEMBERS' ADVERTISEMENTS.

Scenes from any Crosby film from 1936 onwards available at 2/2d. each, plus 3d. postage; also the very latest snap (5" x 3") of Bing, Dixie and boys, taken on the lawn of their Hayden Lake home, price 1/4d. and 2½d. post.

Send orders without delay to Dot Hardiman, 1/17 New Street, Smethwick, Staffs.

Margaret Rainbow, of 130 Church Road, Yardley, Birmingham, has for disposal nearly all catalogue Brunswicks for 4/6d. each, mint condition.

CELLULOID CROSBY

Continuing a series of articles dealing with Bing's films.

by Ralph Harding.

DIXIE

A fine old "Suth'n" film devoted to the life and musical aspirations of Daniel Decatur Emmett, a minstrel singer and composer from the Southern States. In Dixie, Bing had all the wealth of negro songs - the result was a film full of warm melody and colourful scenes. This film was the very first that Bing made in technicolor ... we saw the famous face, blue eyes, fair hair and complexion for the first time in true colour. A superb cast supported Bing and brought to prominence a new comedian Billy de Wolfe. The story is worth re-telling in detail. The film opens with Bing as Dan Emmett singing "Sunday, Monday or always" to Marjorie Reynolds (she played opposite Bing in "Holiday Inn") while her father's house burns down due to Bing's smouldering pipe that he left on the table. Bing is local fire-chief and holds the key of the fire-station. While our hero is woo-ing the house is gutted and Thomas Mitchell as the long-suffering father gives an ultimatum to Bing to come back richer by a thousand dollars or else no can marry his beloved Marjorie. Bing already has 500 bucks left to him by his rich uncle and to build it up to double seems pretty easy. Away goes Bing on his way to New Orleans by riverboat. Delightful scenes on the Mississippi and the riverboat enables Bing to sing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" aided by a chorus of negro workers.

Billy de Wolfe (Mr. Bones) bone player and accordianist de luxe, card-sharper, scoundrel and South'n style spiv wheedles his way into Bing's company with small talk and flattery and then proceeds to eat most of his lunch. He then defrauds Bing of his 500 greenbacks by a phony card game and hops off the boat.

Billy is next seen in a flash restaurant pulling the cockroach trick. This is a method of getting free eats that I must try myself sometime. You order an expensive meal, eat the lot until you reach the sweet and then hiding the live cockroach in the pastry you raise a terrific squawk for the manager and complain about the food. Instead of paying for the meal, the management ends up by compensating you. Mr. Bones reads an advert in the local paper for an accordianist but when he applies for the job, he meets up with Bing who had inserted the advert just to catch up with Billy. After Bing realises that Billy has spent all the 500 anyway and he won't get much satisfaction out of beating him up, he decides to side up with him. Billy takes Bing back to the boarding house where he lives run by Dottie Lamour. Dottie mistrusts actors on sight but after a frigid start, takes an interest in our hero that leads to a warmer feeling. The boarding house is run on a losing basis. The boarders are mostly out-of-work actors and vaudeville folk on their beam ends. Bing, Billy and Lynne Overman get jobs as a show but on the night of the show one of the trio gets a piperoc of a black eye and to cover up, Bing decides on blackface for all of them. Then further accidents befall the troupe on the night and to cover up on the stage Bing indulges in back-chat ... and so nigger minstrels were born.

The South were tickled pink with white men dressed up in the exaggerated and colourful clothes, the black face and rolling eyes of the negro. Negro minstrels caught on and with Bing composing new tunes and fresh acts, the troupe formed a really big act.

Dan Emmett (Bing) and his troupe of Negro Minstrels with Mr. Bones and Lynne Overman aiding and abetting go on from triumph to triumph. Although Billy de Wolfe is under the impression that he is the figure-head of success, it's really the genius of Bing at song-writing and stage presentation that is really getting them places. At the same time Bing and Billy are rivals to the affection of Dottie and Bing is winning easily on points, although his conscience is giving him twinges in respect of Marjorie who was waiting patiently for him at home.

He decides to stage a terrific presentation and on the first night Bing leaves his pipe smouldering on his dressing table in the theatre and voila ! the whole theatre goes up in flames. As it was an all-wooden construction job, the audience gets a very lurid fire scene. Just for the record, there are three full-scale fire scenes in this film. I wonder if the technicolor boys had anything to do with this. And all this smouldering pipe business ... I'm beginning to realise how the Crosby home burnt down in Jan 1943. That's the year one of the finest Louis Armstrong collections went up in smoke.

Anyway, back to the story ... things start to go badly, Bing quarrels with Dottie and finally decides to go back to Marjorie and tell her that he loves Dottie. But when he eventually gets back to the old Southern mansion, he finds that his ex flame is completely paralysed from the waist down and confined in a wheel-chair for life. Bing just hasn't the heart to break the news to her that he came home to give her the air and so he marries her and with her he returns. The reception from Dottie is slightly heated and Bing leaves the troupe. For a time he manages to eke out an existence by hawking his songs to publishers but this finally comes to an end and after a lot of persuasion, he returns to manage the troupe, write fresh songs, stage fresh presentations and generally liven up the show that had gone to pieces since the departure of Bing.

To obtain a suitable theatre, Billy de Wolfe plays poker with the Opera House owner and by devious methods of cheating (at least he tried to cheat and found he got on better by playing fair !!) he won the lease of the Opera House.

The night of the big show arrived and patrons were horrified to see that instead of opera they were going to get a minstrel show. Bing had written a big number for this show. Much against general opinion, he insisted on singing it in very slow tempo and the general result was not very pleasing. The opening acts were received very coldly and when Bing went into his "Dixie" number in slow tempo, the show began to get the bird. But Bing had left his inevitable pipe ... you've guessed it ... smouldering in the dressing room and once again the theatre catches fire. Bing realises that proceedings have got to be speeded up and that the audience must not panic and he proceeds to sing "Dixie" at a much faster speed ... in fact working it up to the tempo that we know today. The tune immediately catches on and while back-stage the scene shifters are fighting a real inferno, the audience out front are singing this tune that later was to carve a niche in history for its composer.

Meanwhile, Marjorie his ailing wife realised that she was definitely a liability to Bing and realising that Dottie meant something more than just his friend, landlady and help-mate had penned a little note and left it in his dressing room, telling him that they are through and generally given him the idea that there just ain't no future in wedded bliss. The note goes up in flames with about half the opera house. Bing realises he still loves Marjorie and Dottie finds solace in the arms of Billy de Wolfe and every thing ends up as all films should ... leaving bobby soxers and hard-worked housewives happy and contented. The songs that appeared (and let us be honest, they reached no dizzy heights ... but were pleasant nevertheless) were "Dixie" "Sunday, Monday or Always" "My Gal's from Missouri" "If you please" and "Swing low, Sweet chariot" and not forgetting a tune quite unknown to me and as far as I know never recorded called "I like to ride in a buggy with a horse that knows the way back home"

Bing has only recorded three of these numbers and it does seem rather odd that he never recorded the title song "Dixie"

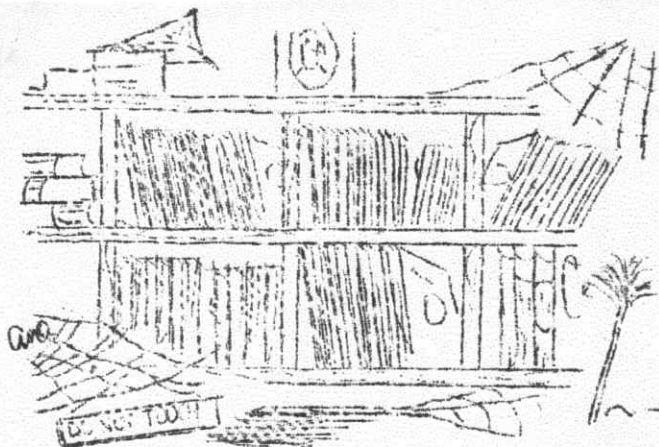
(This series to be continued)

"R I S T I C"

The projected idea of issuing rare and interesting Bing Crosby records on RISTIC label has unfortunately been suspended. Like all ideas in theory it had great possibilities but it needed the support of many collectors and Crosby enthusiasts. The intention was to print one hundred copies and we hoped to dispose of at least 75 copies. The response from club members was very poor and only twenty real enthusiasts were interested in this project. However these twenty members were extremely enthusiastic and to them I extend my thanks for their welcome letters and postcards and welcome their ideas for issues, criticisms and ideas. The noted jazz-collector who was co-operating with RISTIC has already issued several of these discs with rare jazz content. They have sold well because the jazz collector out-numbers the lone Crosby collector. In passing I would like to compile a record of the Crosby disc-collectors belonging to our club. So if anyone who collects Crosby discs seriously and intends to try and obtain as near as possible collection of issued Crosby discs complete will drop a card to the editor Reg Davis or myself giving details of your collection, i.e. number of records, number of years spent in collecting, whether you collect any other type of record as well etc. we will publish in our next issue a register of collectors. This will also enable collectors to correspond and perhaps some collectors are unaware of the fact that another serious collector lives comparatively near them.

Once again may I thank those enthusiasts who did respond by letter and card. If I ever win a football pool rest assured that those issues will see the light of day ... for free !!

Sincerely yours, Ralph S. Harding, "Eros", 27, Springvale Avenue, Brentford, Middlesex.



THE GROANER in the GROOVE

by LES. GAYLOR

Once again the time has come around for me to give you my views on the latest Bing releases. There have been seven in number since our last Journal, which cover a period of approximately four months, so I feel that for once we cannot blame the Decca Record Company for not releasing any of our favourites.

The first releases were :-

04338	Rosaleen.	L6656	19/2/52	****
	Don't ever be afraid to go Home.	L6657	19/2/52	****

"Rosaleen" is a little ditty about an Irish girl, and Bing is in good form - especially with his spot of whistling. It has good, sensible lyrics and tells us the story of his love for his Irish colleen.

The reverse is another story type number, on which Bing seems very happy with himself.

Both these numbers are good Bing and the type of number that only he would record. Perry Botkin's String Band and the King's Men support Bing on these two sides.

04947	Indian Summer.	L6050	7/2/51	*****
	Row, Row, Row.	L6309	20/6/51	***

"Indian Summer" is the famous number that one always associates with that famous American composer, the late Victor Herbert. Bing's treatment of this American classic is, I think, excellent and is Crosby material all the way. He sings it nice and slowly, just how I like it. John Scott Trotter provides his usual superb orchestral accompaniment.

"Row, Row, Row" is a lively little tune telling how and what a young man got up to when he went for a boat trip. This is one of the numbers dating back to the early thirties which has been recently revived, and there are many better Bings than this which have not yet been issued. I think that the ending is very poor indeed and Bing's singing there tends to spoil the whole disc. John Scott Trotter again provides the musical accompaniment, but not in the brilliant vein that he does on "Indian Summer" - but still "Row, Row, Row" just paddles home.

04965 The Moon came up with a great
idea last night.
Water Melon Weather.

L6768 16/5/52 *****
L6769 16/5/52 *****

Two duets with Peggy Lee. These two sides are very good as far as Bing is concerned. He is in great form, but I think poor Peggy Lee sounds utterly lost. She sings far too sentimentally - almost as though she is slopping all over Bing. However Bing pulls her through and stands out wonderfully by comparison. Vic Schoen provides the musical backing in an excellent fashion, and I notice that Bing's old friends Van Heusen and Burke were responsible for the first title and that Hoagy Carmichael had a hand in the other.

04970 Just a Little Lovin'. W82553 23/3/52 ****
Till the End of the World. W82774 24/4/52 ****

These two sides deal, strangely enough, with the subject of love, and are sung in the story type manner and not the usual sentimental style. They both have a very nice lilt to them and Bing turns in an excellent performance. He is accompanied by a new bunch of musicians who call themselves Grady Martin and his Slew Foot Five.

04981 Zing a Little Zong. L6756 8/5/52 ***

I must confess that I have, as yet, been unable to see Bing's new film "Just for You" but, judging by these records, the tunes do not seem to be up to much. Personally I was hoping that Dubin and Warren would do a far better job than Van Heusen and Burke have done lately, but it would seem that my personal hopes have been dashed.

"Zing a Little Zong" would appear to be the hit number from the film, although I can't see a lot in it myself. It has very trite lyrics, such as "Dolly" and "Dilly", simply shoved in to make up the rhyme. However, Bing's opening bars are excellent, but afterwards all beauty fades away among a mass of over-recorded orchestra and a chorus of voices, through which Bing and Jane Wyman struggle to make themselves heard.

The reverse of this side is a solo by Jane Wyman, called "The Maiden of Guadalupe", which is also from the film but very disappointing fare for the Bing fan.

04984 I'll Si Si Ya in Bahia. L6658 21/2/52 ***
The Live Oak Tree. L6659 21/2/52 ***

Like "Zing", "I'll Si Si Ya in Bahia" starts off with some excellent Crosby, but unfortunately does not last. This is a South American flavoured song, as its title would suggest.

The reverse strikes me as being a relatively unimportant number and consists very largely of repeating the much hackneyed refrain - "When I'm with you and you're with me", etc.